

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented product design method comprising
retaining a plurality of product layouts, each layout including one or more image
containers, each image container having an associated size and position in the layout,
5 retaining a plurality of images, each image being associated with one or more
selection criteria,
in response to the receipt of at least one selection criterion from a user, providing one
or more product designs for displaying to the user, the one or more product designs having
been generated from one or more retained images associated with at least one of the selection
10 criteria entered by the user and one or more retained layouts.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the size of each image container in the retained
layouts is one of a plurality of pre-determined sizes.

15 3. The method of claim 2 wherein each retained image is retained in a size that is one of
the plurality of pre-determined sizes.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein at least some of the retained images are organized into
a plurality of image groups, each image group containing images that are variations of the
20 same base image.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein the one or more product designs are generated from
one or more retained images having sizes corresponding to the sizes of the one or more image
containers in the one or more retained layouts.

25 6. The method of claim 2 further comprising retaining instructions for generating
versions of retained images corresponding to at least some of the plurality of pre-determined
sizes, and wherein versions are generated to correspond to the sizes of one or more image
containers in the one or more retained layouts.

30

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the instructions for generating a version of a retained image include the height and width of the version and the location of a point in the retained version from which the height and width are measured.

5 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the instructions for generating a version of a retained image include the location of at least two points in the retained version from which the height, width and position of the version can be determined.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising retaining a plurality of color schemes for
10 use in generating the at least one product image.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein each retained image is associated with one of the retained color schemes, wherein one image container in each layout is the dominant image container, and wherein the color scheme associated with the image in the dominant image
15 container of a layout is used to generate a product design controls the color scheme used in the product design.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more retained layouts are selected based on the type of product being designed by the user.

20

12. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one selection criterion entered by the user is the desired number of images in the layout and wherein the one or more retained layouts have a number of image containers corresponding to the desired number of images.

25 13. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one selection criterion associated with each image is a keyword and wherein at least one selection criterion entered by the user is a keyword.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising
30 incorporating user-supplied content into the product design, and
producing a quantity of a product in physical form from the product design.

15. A product design system comprising
a server system having data storage means and means for communicating with a client system,

a plurality of layouts stored on the server system, each layout including one or more
5 image containers, each image container having an associated size and position in the layout,
a plurality of images stored on the server system, each image being associated with one or more selection criteria, and

means responsive to at least one selection criteria from a user of the client system for transmitting one or more product designs to the client system, the one or more product
10 designs having been generated by the server system from one or more retained images associated with at least one of the selection criteria entered by the user and one or more retained layouts.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising means for combining one or more stored
15 layouts and one or more stored images to generate product designs.

17. A computer program stored on a server system operatively connected to at least one client system, the server system having a plurality of stored layouts, each layout including one or more image containers, each image container having an associated size and position in
20 the layout, and a plurality of stored images, each stored image being associated with one or more selection criteria, the program comprising

computer code adapted to download to and execute in a client system and to display one or more selection criteria tools to a user of the client system, and

computer code adapted to execute on the server system, including computer code adapted
25 to receive one or more selection criteria from the client system, and computer code adapted to send to the client system one or more product designs, the one or more product designs being generated from one or more stored images associated with the received selection criteria and one or more stored layouts.

30 18. The computer program of claim 17 further comprising computer code adapted to combine one or more stored layouts and one or more stored images to generate product designs.

19. The computer program of claim 18 wherein the size of each image container in the stored layouts is one of a plurality of pre-determined sizes, wherein each stored image is stored in a size that is one of the plurality of pre-determined sizes.

5